ONTARIO HERITAGE TRUST

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Heritage Matters

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Ontario's eastern treasures

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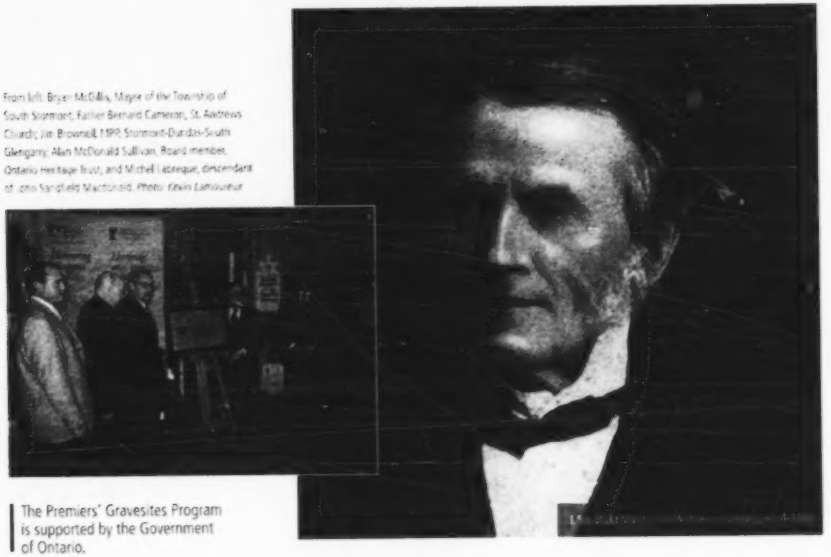
Honouring Ontario's premiers

By Liane Nowosielski



From left: Bryan McGillis, Mayor of the Township of South Stormont, Father Bernard Cameron, St. Andrews Church; Jim Brownell, MPP, Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry; Alan McDonald Sullivan, Board member, Ontario Heritage Trust; and Michel Lacroque, descendant of John Sandfield Macdonald. Photo: Kevin Lamoureux

The Premiers' Gravesites Program is supported by the Government of Ontario.

The Ontario Heritage Trust launched the Premiers' Gravesites Program at a memorable ceremony last November in Cornwall to commemorate the province's first premier – the Honourable John Sandfield Macdonald. This initiative was created to ensure respectful recognition at the final resting place of Ontario's premiers.

To acknowledge the premiers' significant contributions to the history of our province, the Trust has designed distinctive bronze markers inscribed with the premier's name and dates of service. These will be placed at each gravesite, accompanied by a flagpole flying the Ontario flag. The Trust will endeavour to commemorate these gravesites in chronological order based on each premier's term of service. The Honourable John Sandfield Macdonald was the first of 18 premiers to be commemorated through this program.

A lawyer from the Cornwall area, Macdonald was elected to the first Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada. He went on to serve important roles in all eight assemblies before Confederation. An ally of fmr. Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald, he was appointed premier of Ontario at Confederation. He held the position until 1871, and died soon after at Cornwall.

The marker unveiling ceremony took place at St. Andrews Catholic Church in St. Andrews West. Immediately following the ceremony, guests were invited to attend the raising of the flag at nearby St. Andrews Roman Catholic Pioneer Cemetery, Macdonald's final resting place. To ensure a successful and meaningful event, the Trust worked with the local community and cemetery board. Descendants of John Sandfield Macdonald were consulted as well, some of whom were on hand to pay homage to an ancestor who played an important role in shaping Ontario's history.

For details of upcoming unveiling events, and for more information on the Premiers' Gravesites Program, visit the Trust's website at www.heritagetrust.on.ca.

Funding for this program was announced in 2007 by the Minister of Culture. The initiative was inspired by a private member's bill – an Act to Preserve the Gravesites of Former Premiers of Ontario – introduced in the legislature in 2005 by Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry MPP Jim Brownell.

Liane Nowosielski is an Assistant Marketing and Communications Coordinator with the Ontario Heritage Trust.

Protecting Ottawa's Carp Hills

By Tamara Chipperfield

A beaver pond in the recently acquired Carp Hills property.

Just north of the Village of Carp lie the Carp Hills – one of the largest and wildest natural areas within the City of Ottawa. The Carp Hills are classified as a Regionally Significant Life Science Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) and constitute the largest outcropping of the Canadian Shield in southeastern Ontario, east of the Frontenac Arch. With funding assistance from the Ontario Heritage Trust's Natural Spaces Land Acquisition and Stewardship Program (NSLASP), the City of Ottawa recently acquired a 54.5-acre (22-hectare) parcel of land within the Carp Hills over which the Trust will hold a heritage conservation easement.

The City of Ottawa and the Trust were eager to acquire this land to protect the rich plant and animal communities that thrive in the Carp Hills. Many of these communities contain species that are seldom seen in this area. A mix of beaver ponds, wet meadows, unforested bedrock outcrops and early successional forests provide habitat for this biodiversity. The beaver ponds provide nesting habitat for a variety of water birds – such as ducks and herons – as well as habitat for the provincially and nationally threatened Blandings Turtle. The bare granite bedrock supports plant communities typical of cliff tops and outcrops in the Gatineau Hills of western Quebec. This large outcropping of the Canadian Shield has a complex bedrock geology containing a variety of gneissic, granitic and marble substrates.

This recent acquisition adds to the 1,903 acres (770 hectares) of land that the City of Ottawa has acquired in order to conserve and protect the Carp Hills. The City of Ottawa has a commitment to purchase additional lands within the Carp Hills in order to link and consolidate city-owned properties. "The consolidation of these lands into public ownership will protect a significant natural heritage feature," said David Miller, a Senior Environmental Planner for the City of Ottawa. In addition, the City of Ottawa intends to prepare a stewardship plan that will ensure the Carp Hills are protected to ensure their ecological integrity in perpetuity.

The Ontario Heritage Trust is proud to be a partner in this project to help save more of our precious natural heritage.

The NSLASP was established in 2005, with the support of the province, for the acquisition and stewardship of provincially significant natural heritage lands. To date, the Ontario Heritage Trust has approved funding for 54 applications to this program.

Tamara Chipperfield is a Natural Heritage Consultant with the Trust.

Heritage off the 401

By Kathryn McLeod

Highway 401, stretching from Windsor to the Quebec border, is one of the busiest highways in North America. Anyone who has journeyed east of Toronto will agree that most of the time, the 401 is the fastest route to such destinations as Kingston, Brockville and Cornwall. But it is far from the most exciting. Throughout eastern Ontario, often just a short distance from the 401, there are several routes you can take to explore the rich built, cultural and natural heritage of southeastern Ontario.

One route is the Loyalist Parkway, or Highway 33, which runs from Trenton to Kingston and follows the course of Loyalist settlement in this part of the province. The drive along the Loyalist Parkway affords beautiful views of Lake Ontario and the surrounding countryside, as well as opportunities to explore and interpret the area's abundant Loyalist heritage. In Picton, you can visit the District Court House and Gaol, a two-storey Greek Revival structure built between 1832 and 1834. It remains one of Ontario's oldest public buildings still in use. Just north of Picton is the White Chapel – the first Methodist church in Prince Edward County. It has existed as a place of worship longer than any Methodist church in the province. This section of the parkway also brings you in close proximity to Sandbanks Provincial Park – home to two of the largest freshwater sandbars in the world and a diversity of plant and wildlife.

Heading east from Picton, the Glenora ferry takes you to Adolphustown, where you can view the provincial plaque erected in recognition of the 1784 Loyalist Landing Place and visit the UEL Heritage Centre and Park. You may also wish to visit Hay Bay Church just north of the town. Built in 1797, it was the first Methodist Chapel in Upper Canada. Further east is The Fairfield White House in Bath. Built by William Fairfield in 1793, this house survives as an outstanding 18th-century building.

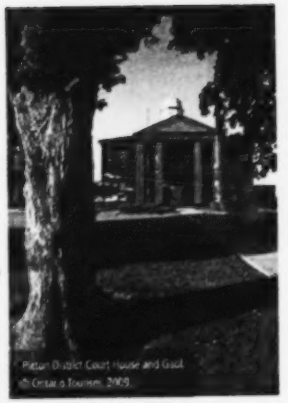
From Bath, it is not far to Kingston – where you could spend several days exploring its cultural and built heritage. Although the Loyalist Parkway ends at Kingston, you need not return to the 401. Travel east a short distance on Highway 2 to connect with the 1000 Islands Parkway at Gananoque and travel along the north shore of the St. Lawrence to Brockville. Along this route are many chances to experience the natural heritage of the 1000 Islands ecosystem through island tours, canoe trips and scuba diving.

The city of Brockville lies at the east end of the 1000 Islands Parkway, boasting a wealth of built and cultural heritage. While the city is home to a number of stately homes, it also has an impressive historic downtown. At the north end sits the Johnstown District Court House and Gaol, a stone neoclassical structure – one of the finer pre-1845 court houses remaining in Ontario. Extending south from the court house to the St. Lawrence, Court House Avenue is a wide boulevard with an elaborate fountain, lovely gardens and a First World War memorial.

Continuing east along Highway 2, you will reach the historic fort town of Prescott. If your interest is military heritage, visit Fort Wellington. Now a National Historic Site, Fort Wellington was built during the War of 1812 to defend the St. Lawrence River shipping route from American invasion. The Battle of the Windmill National Historic Site is also located in Prescott. This stone windmill stands as a lasting reminder of the 1838 skirmish. A visit to the Blue Church in Prescott is another worthwhile experience. Built in 1845, this small, wooden chapel exists as a memorial to the many settlers whose graves are located in the adjacent churchyard.

Continue your heritage tour in the nearby Morrisburg area and discover the heritage of the St. Lawrence Seaway. A visit to the Lost Villages Museum Complex tells the stories of communities along the St. Lawrence that were flooded in 1958 to allow for construction of the Seaway.

The next time you venture into eastern Ontario along the 401, consider taking a detour to explore these and other heritage gems just off the highway. While you may not get to your final destination as quickly, it will certainly be a worthwhile adventure as you explore the heritage treasures of southeastern Ontario.



Picton District Court House and Gaol.
© Ontario Tourism, 2009.

Kathryn McLeod is the Public Education Program Assistant at the Ontario Heritage Trust.

Sandbanks Provincial Park contains two of the largest freshwater sandbars in the world.
© Ontario Tourism, 2009.

The Rockwood story

By Ellen Kowalchuk

Behind the stately façade of Kingston's Rockwood Villa lies the history of mental health services in Ontario. Built in 1842 as a residence for local politician and businessman John Solomon Cartwright, Rockwood Villa was purchased by the government in 1856 as the nucleus of the Kingston Asylum. Since then, the site has evolved and new buildings have been constructed that reflect changing attitudes toward the delivery of mental health services. Other buildings on the site – including Rockwood Villa – have also been adapted to new uses.

In commissioning George Browne to design his residence, Cartwright selected one of Canada's leading architects. Browne took advantage of the site's topography and lakefront setting by orienting the villa's formal, neoclassical façade towards King Street and positioning a sequence of rooms to culminate with a spectacular view of Lake Ontario. Cartwright, however, was unable to enjoy the picturesque beauty of Browne's design as his health deteriorated shortly after completion of the building.

Cartwright's death in 1845 prompted his widow Sarah to rent the property to John Palmer Litchfield, a British physician and reputed rake who used the villa for a private asylum. In 1856, when the government of Upper Canada purchased the estate for use as an asylum, Litchfield and his male patients resided in the villa while the stables were renovated to house female patients. With completion of the massive Rockwood Building to the south in 1870, Rockwood Villa ceased to house patients and reverted to a residence for the hospital superintendent.

Today, the 50-hectare (123.6-acre) site is owned by the provincial government and managed by the Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC). ORC recognizes the heritage significance of the property and has identified it as a key heritage resource. Management of the property is guided by the *ORC Heritage Management Process* that provides for the identification and conservation of heritage places in a manner that protects their values for future generations.

Through its heritage management process, ORC identifies and communicates the heritage values of a place, provides training and support for ORC staff and service providers, undertakes routine maintenance, and hires heritage professionals to complete evaluations and conservation projects. ORC also consults directly with the Kingston Municipal Heritage Committee on capital works projects affecting Rockwood Villa. ORC's continuing stewardship of the property includes comprehensive conservation planning to ensure that the cultural landscape, of which Rockwood Villa is an integral component, is appropriately and sensitively integrated into future uses.

Today, Rockwood Villa provides office space for 25 provincial ministry staff. Despite changes to its use, much of the villa's original layout and fabric remains intact. This includes rectangular and curving spaces, vaulting and a two-storey octagonal tribune. Interior fabric includes French doors, plasterwork, woodwork and inlaid flooring.

Introducing contemporary features while retaining the heritage character of the building is a challenge for the ORC. Over the last several years, ORC has integrated life safety measures, improved heating and cooling systems, and incorporated modern office infrastructure into the 19th century building.

> The Ontario Heritage Trust unveiled a provincial plaque in 1968 to commemorate Rockwood. The plaque stands on the grounds of the estate.

Ellen Kowalchuk is a Cultural Heritage Specialist at the Ontario Realty Corporation

ONTARIO'S EASTERN TREASURES

By [illegible]

Statue of Samuel de Champlain, Ottawa.
© Ontario Tourism, 2009.

Inhabited by Aboriginal Peoples for 7,000 years, present-day eastern Ontario is rich with heritage. The area gradually transformed as French and later United Empire Loyalists migrated to the province. As early communities grew, some of Ontario's most distinctive commercial and cultural centres, transportation and communication routes, defence installations and political institutions emerged. Today, eastern Ontario's communities, traditions and people offer a unique glimpse of Ontario's past.

Eastern Ontario encompasses the land situated east of Frontenac County, including Hastings, Lanark, Leeds and Grenville, Lennox and Addington, Prescott and Russell, Prince Edward, Renfrew, Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry counties and Ottawa. Geography has played a key role in shaping the area's history. To the north, the Ottawa River separated the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. The St. Lawrence River to the south formed the natural boundary between Canada and the United States. The Rideau Canal, running from Kingston to Ottawa, connected these waterways – transportation and communication routes that influenced migration and settlement, industry and trade, politics and defence. And, to the west, the Trent Severn Waterway – running from Trenton to Georgian Bay – was constructed over a period of 80 years. Originally intended for commercial traffic, this waterway became one of the province's primary recreational attractions.

Archaeological sites show that Aboriginal Peoples who hunted, fished and lived throughout this part of the province also established communities and complex societies. The Akwesasne Mohawks continue to reside on both sides of the St. Lawrence, their descendants have lived in this region of Ontario long before the establishment of either Canada or the United States.

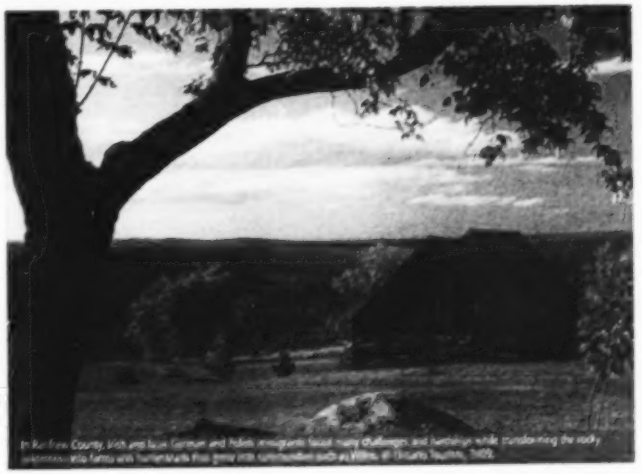
The relationship of Aboriginal Peoples to eastern Ontario is also rooted in the province's loyalist heritage. During the American Revolution, Mohawk allies to the British were forced from their ancestral homeland in present-day New York State. To compensate for this loss, the Crown gave land to the Mohawks and others displaced by the revolution. As a Mohawk ally serving in the British Army, Captain John Deserontyon selected land on the shores of the Bay of Quinte. In 1784, approximately 20 families arrived at their new home, thus marking the beginning of Mohawk settlement on the Bay of Quinte (today's Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory). The arrival of the Mohawks on the Bay of Quinte is recognized as a National Historic Event.

In the 17th century, Europeans began visiting the area. In 1610, the French explorer Samuel de Champlain sent Etienne Brûlé, one of his followers, to live among the Algonquian or Anishinabeg to learn their languages and gather information. In 1613, Champlain travelled on the Ottawa River and other waterways to the Pembroke area before turning back. He engaged in diplomacy with the Algonquian people and later became the first European to write a description of the region. He returned to the Ottawa River in 1615 and later led a small party of Frenchmen with a large force of Hurons and Algonquians down the Trent River to attack an Onondaga village near present-day Syracuse.

The French presence in Ontario grew in the late 17th century when forts and fur-trading posts and missions were built at present-day Kingston and elsewhere. French influence diminished with the fall of New France, although an influx of Quebecois workers to eastern Ontario created vibrant francophone communities through the St. Lawrence River area and elsewhere.

A number of provincial plaques in Kingston and the surrounding area tell the stories of trade and settlement during the French regime in what is now eastern Ontario. In particular, plaques in Kingston's City and Confederation parks commemorate the establishment of Fort Frontenac and the Cataraqui settlement at the site of the present-day city. A plaque in Cornwall recognizes more recent French heritage by telling the story of the many workers and tradesmen who established a vibrant and lasting community in that city. ▶

ONTARIO'S EASTERN TREASURES



In Renfrew County, Irish and later German and Polish immigrants faced many challenges and hardships while transforming the rocky wilderness into farms with homesteads that grew into communities such as Wilno. © Ontario Tourism, 2009.

Early communities along Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence grew out of the aftermath of the American Revolution in 1783 when British Loyalists resettled throughout eastern Ontario. Many of these Loyalists were soldiers who came to Canada with their families after having lost their homes and peacetime livelihoods. They brought with them the desire to live as loyal subjects under British laws and institutions.

Some of Ontario's oldest structures are found in this area – Hawley House in Bath, built about 1785 by Vermont Loyalist Captain Jeptha Hawley, and Homewood in Maitland, built in 1799 for Dr. Solomon Jones. Strong British influences and heritage can also be seen in the architecture and traditions of communities settled by Loyalists and later British immigrants. Robust stone buildings were built by Scottish masons from locally quarried limestone. Names such as Cornwall, Williamstown, Glengarry, Brockville, Kingston and Bath speak to the area's British heritage.

As the communities grew, so did some of Ontario's most impressive institutional structures. Churches – including the Blue Church in Prescott, Hay Bay Church north of Adolphustown and St. Raphaels, northeast of Cornwall in the eponymous village – serve as tangible reminders of the province's religious heritage. Town halls – like the ones found in Kingston, Smiths Falls and Perth – are testaments to democratic government and community. County courts and jails in Brockville, Kingston, Perth and Picton stand as symbols of law and justice. Commercial buildings and streetscapes – such as the ones found in Kingston, Perth, Carleton Place, Brockville, Picton and Prescott – represent Ontario's economic vitality. Centres of culture – for example, the Regent Theatre in Picton and the Grand Theatre and Newlands Pavilion in Kingston – are representative of the province's rich artistic heritage.

A network of defence installations dots the border, helping to defend Canada during the War of 1812 and seeing action in the Rebellion of 1837. Today, Fort Wellington in Prescott, the Martello towers and Forts Henry and Frederick in Kingston – and other military installations – are reminders of both war and peace.

One of the area's most impressive built features – the Rideau Canal – runs from Kingston to Ottawa. This scenic waterway passes through many historic communities such as Smiths Falls, Merrickville, Burritt's Rapids, Manotick and others.

The need for the canal grew out of the War of 1812 when American forces threatened the safety and accessibility of the province's main transportation and communication route – the St. Lawrence River. Construction of the canal began in 1826 under the leadership of Lieutenant-Colonel John By of the Royal Engineers. The work involved soldiers and thousands of labourers, mostly Irish and Scottish immigrants. They worked by hand with picks and shovels – felling trees, drilling through rock and moving earth to cut the canal. The work was harsh with labourers facing accidents, poor working conditions, labour disputes and outbreaks of cholera and malaria. It is estimated that 1,000 workers died during the canal's construction. The canal reached Bytown, or Ottawa, six years later at a cost of £800,000.

Over the years, the Rideau Canal has played an important role in Ontario's economy as a trade and immigration route – and now as a tourism destination. Logging was an important part of the Ontario economy and contributed significantly to the province's growth. During the 19th century, the Rideau Canal facilitated extensive logging, lumbering and milling enterprises, all of which contributed to the wealth and development in this part of eastern Ontario.

Today, the Rideau Canal is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a National Historic Site and a Canadian Heritage river. It is visited by over a million tourists and recreational boaters annually and is commemorated by provincial plaques in Kingston Mills and Smiths Falls. Various sites along the Rideau Heritage Route allow for further exploration of the canal's heritage, including a number of its historic lock stations and the Rideau Canal Museum in Smiths Falls.

By the mid-19th century, the inland of eastern Ontario opened as Ontario's population grew. To encourage immigration and settlement, the government offered incentives such as land grants and settlement assistance to European immigrants. Lands were opened along a network of colonization roads, such as the Opeongo Road in Renfrew County. In that area, Irish and later German and Polish immigrants faced many challenges and hardships while transforming the rocky wilderness into farms and homesteads that grew into the communities ▶

Fort Wellington, Prescott. © Ontario Tourism, 2009.

of Wilno, Brudnell, Barry's Bay and others. This influence can be seen in the homes and barns built of dovetailed log construction and in the churches and wooden crosses that dot the countryside, as well as the rich eastern European customs and traditions found in some communities.

Eastern Ontario is renowned for its green spaces and scenic natural heritage, including the St. Lawrence River, the Thousand Islands and the Rideau Heritage Route, along which you can canoe, kayak, bicycle or hike through a combination of pastoral farmland, forests and lakelands. One of the area's most impressive features is the Frontenac Arch, a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve. This ancient granite landform covers approximately 2,700 square kilometers (1,042 square miles) mainly north and east of Kingston.

Eastern Ontario is rich in built, cultural and natural heritage. Its many historic sites and plaques tell an important story of the evolution of legal, military, political, social and religious institutions in this part of the province. Through the work of heritage organizations and dedicated community members, the heritage of this region is available for exploration and interpretation by both Ontarians and visitors to the province.

Wayne Kelly is the Manager of Public Education and Community Development at the Ontario Heritage Trust. Kathryn McLeod is the Public Education Program Assistant at the Trust.

Today, the Rideau Canal is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a National Historic Site, a Canadian heritage river and commemorated by provincial plaques.
© Ontario Tourism, 2009

From mill to museum

By Glenda Jones

Photo courtesy of John T. Fowler, Photography for Education

The big oak door of the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum in Almonte in eastern Ontario swings silently open as it has done for over 100 years. Tucked in a corner of the hallway is a swirl-brass staircase leading to the upstairs boardroom. The boardroom, however, is not a dusty retreat of old office ghosts. This space is now a vibrant and cozy gallery graced with quilted wall hangings by an internationally renowned artist.

Curator Michael Ridley-Lancaster invites the public to explore the museum, encouraging artists to consider the museum a living space worthy of many pursuits. With three areas available for exhibitions – and one a learning centre with looms, spinning wheels, and educational artifacts – Ridley-Lancaster has incorporated showcases, active participation areas, artifacts and theatrical productions into the museum.

The museum's collection of manufacturing machinery comprises half of a large upstairs gallery. The remainder of the space, with its gleaming white walls and lovely old beams, is a prime exhibition space for large art installations – including painted silks, staircase knitting and embroidery. While visitors learn about the textile trade or admire art, they can also watch a vintage fashion show or enjoy an artist's reception. The setting lends itself perfectly to intimate entertainment.

While the first-floor Rosamond Gallery has been upgraded, it retains its rugged walls as part of the ambience. This large room has hosted the Bayeux tapestry reproduction exhibition, many quilting shows, textile trade fairs and, most recently, a display of huge scenic sculptures by local artist Juan Geuer. These shows attracted large audiences, several who attended requested the privilege of displaying their own art here. According to Geuer, the space is unique in Canada. It allows art to be displayed in a natural setting where the pieces can shine against a background whose history becomes part of the exhibition.

Recognizing that the museum needs to appeal to all ages, Ridley-Lancaster opened the Rosamond Gallery as a fashion camp last summer. Surrounded by fabric sculptures and paintings, the students were inspired to create their own masterpieces. Furthermore, he organized a group of young people to dress in period costume and conduct historical tours throughout Almonte. These tours proved highly successful, culminating in a visit by Canadian author Sarah Ellis, whose latest book, "Days of Toil and Tears," was set in Almonte. Her book signing attracted many children to the museum for the first time; they were able to absorb the actual atmosphere of her novel – a unique experience for everyone.

Where once this museum was a repository for old books and dusty relics, it is becoming the centre of artistic endeavour within the community. The building resonates with activity – set against a backdrop of textile exhibits that warm the old building and give it contemporary significance, the museum successfully incorporates history and culture to the enrichment of the whole community.

The Ontario Heritage Trust holds a conservation easement on the mill that houses the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum.

Glenda Jones is a local Almonte author and community volunteer

The new St. Brigid's

By Michael Vidoni

GUEST COLUMNIST

St. Brigid's Catholic Church in Ottawa has entered a new era. For almost 120 years, it has stood at the heart of a diverse and dynamic neighbourhood not far from Parliament Hill. Its builders, ministers and parishioners came from the immigrant stock that occupied the tenements of Lowertown and worked in the mills that belonged to the Protestant power-elite of Upper Town. As ownership now passes from the diocese to a group of cultural enthusiasts, the new St. Brigid's Centre for the Arts and Humanities will become a magnet for the throngs of young, hip and moneyed Ottawans who are settling in this now-diverse quarter.

The Catholic diocese of Ottawa (then Bytown) was established by Pope Pius IX in 1847 to serve the growing population of French Canadians and Irish in the city, many of whom had migrated to the area as labourers on the Rideau Canal. In 1853, the Cathedral of Notre Dame was dedicated; it became the principal place of worship in the city. Other parishes were established in Upper Town and two French-speaking churches were built in the vicinity of the cathedral. In 1888, Archbishop Duhamel agreed to a secession of English-speaking parishioners from the cathedral to establish the parish of St. Brigid's nearby.

The Romanesque Revival church – designed by Ottawa native James R. Bowes – incorporates many styles, as was common in the late Victorian era. Reflecting the modest means of the parish, the church was also constructed of heavy limestone blocks instead of more elaborate stonework. It is fitting that the structure was dedicated to St. Brigid, the patroness of Ireland, as its sparely adorned exterior is reminiscent of Ireland's fortified churches.

The interior is truly a study in contrasts. On the one hand, the layout is simple. The nave is divided in three, with two side aisles flanking the centre one. On the other hand, the ceilings of the side aisles offer rare fan-vaulted construction, decoratively painted and adorned with pendants. Generous pews of carved ash and walnut receive parishioners, and elaborate painted altarpieces decorate the chancel. Ornie and Sons of Montreal installed the magnificent symbol-laden stained glass windows. Irish motifs, such as the harp and shamrock, adorn the gilded pipes of the enormous 1910 Casavant organ in the choir loft.

The real treasure of St. Brigid's, however, came later in its history. In 1908, an ambitious program of interior painting was undertaken by Toussaint-Xenophon Renaud. The Quebecois painter had a prolific career, painting nearly 200 ecclesiastical interiors throughout Quebec and the Ottawa Valley. There are murals of the Nativity, the Descent from the Cross and depictions of the Immaculate Conception and St. Joseph. Renaud also decorated the wooden columns to resemble marble and created an extensive program of polychromy, stenciling and gilding. The whole interior was whitewashed in the 1960s, and only the murals above the main and side altars have been restored.

The church quickly became a focal point for the local Irish population. Until 1895, the Christian Brothers educated young men, while the Grey Sisters did the same for girls. By the time of its 50th anniversary in 1939, the parish offered numerous organized activities, including choirs, service groups and athletic teams. The Society of St. Jerome sewed clothing for the poor and St. Brigid's Young Men's Association fielded teams in hockey, football, track and field, lacrosse and baseball. Notable National Hockey League alumni Alex Connell, Edwin Gorman and King Clancy honed their skills on these teams.

In the latter half of the 20th century, the demographics of St. Brigid's changed. The owner of the church – the Archdiocese of Ottawa – like many dioceses in Ontario, has undergone a property rationalization in recent years. In April 2006, Archbishop Marcel Gervais announced that St. Brigid's would close due to the escalating costs of maintaining the aging building. In September 2007, the last mass was celebrated in the church and it was deconsecrated.

In October that same year, the building was purchased by a non-profit group to convert the space into a cultural venue. The building is protected by a municipal designation and a provincial conservation easement – the elements that make St. Brigid's such an important building will be preserved. Renamed St. Brigid's Centre for the Arts and Humanities, it is the home of the National Irish Canadian Cultural Centre. Its new owners have filled its schedule with events both Irish-focused and cross-cultural. Even as its religious purpose has ended, its important social function is as strong as ever. St. Brigid's continues to fulfil the diverse cultural needs of the new Lowertown.

The Ontario Heritage Trust will launch Heritage Week 2009 at St. Brigid's on Friday, February 13. For more information about Heritage Week 2009 – including activities in communities across the province – visit www.heritagetrust.on.ca and click on Heritage Week under the Spotlight on heritage.

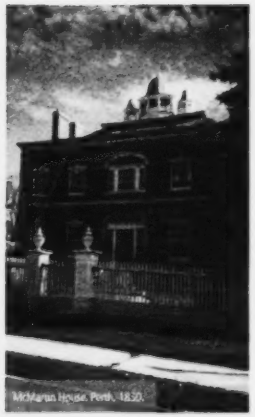
Michael Vidoni is a Toronto-born writer with a degree in history and architectural criticism from the University of Toronto. Vidoni joins the Trust as the Acting Easements Program Coordinator.

BUILDING ON THE PAST

by Romas Bubelis

Romas Bubelis is an Architect with the Ontario Heritage Trust.

Sleeping closet at the Macdonell-Williamson House.



McMartin House, Perth, 1830.

The dining room at Fulford Place in Brockville.

Inge-Va, Perth, 1824.

Eastern Ontario offers an array of impressive historic houses. Some of these houses – owned and operated by the Ontario Heritage Trust – are featured here. They are the former homes of Ontario's leading citizens, providing a lasting legacy of prosperity that started with the fur trade, continued through the development of 19th-century towns toward the dawn of the 20th century. Several of these buildings are also National Historic Sites. Individually, they are provincially significant in both architectural style and in personal history. Collectively, however, they represent a rich cross-section of over 200 years of southeastern Ontario's history.

In the late 18th century, what would become Upper Canada was inhabited largely by First Nations. Loyalist settler Peter Ferguson was granted land in remote Charlottenburgh Township where, in 1784, he erected a log cabin. He eventually sold his property to another settler, John Bethune. In 1804, Bethune built a one-and-a-half-storey house that incorporated the log cabin as a wing. The house eventually passed to renowned cartographer and North West Company partner David Thompson. This is the lineage of the Bethune-Thompson House that stands in the hamlet of Williamstown. It is notable for the French construction technique of its walls as well as its fine late-Georgian front door, staircase and parlour mantel. But most importantly – and still visible within the west wing – are the over-200-year-old log walls of the original Ferguson cabin, a witness to Ontario's antiquity.

Pointe Fortune on the Ottawa River straddles the Quebec-Ontario border. On the west bank, at the head of once-mighty rapids, stands an imposing, four-square Georgian stone mansion built by North West Company partner John Macdonell. From this remote spot, Macdonell operated his trans-shipment service for voyageurs. The house is unexpectedly grand and well finished with a Georgian central hall plan, 10 fireplaces and a second-floor ballroom featuring ornate Adamesque plasterwork – features that attest to Macdonell's success in business. Prosperity also characterized Macdonell's home-life as he and his wife Magdeleine Poitras had 12 children in the course of their life together. The upper floor still retains the original four bedrooms, each with central playing/dressing area flanked by 13 bed-closets tucked into corners of each room.

On the St. Lawrence River near Maitland, Loyalist Dr. Solomon Jones built a large two-storey Georgian stone house in 1800. For many years, Jones was the only doctor between Kingston and Cornwall. The house passed to his son and remarkably through five more generations of family ownership before being acquired by the Trust. The house contains a magnificent collection of textiles, furnishings and agricultural and medical artifacts amassed over 172 continuous years of Jones family occupation.

Further inland, the town of Perth was a well established commercial and military centre by the second decade of the 19th century. Two of the town's prominent lawyers, Thomas Radenhurst and Daniel McMartin, are associated with Trust-owned properties in Perth – Inge-Va (1824) and McMartin House (1830).

These roughly contemporary structures make for an interesting contrast in style. Inge-Va was built of rough, coursed sandstone by Scottish masons. Throughout the 19th century, it underwent alterations reflecting late Georgian, neoclassical and Gothic Revival tastes – but it always remained picturesque, finely detailed and entirely residential in the image of a cottage. McMartin House was built on a grand scale approaching that of a public building – an expression of the American Federal Style, with a two-storey façade of semi-elliptical arches constructed of carefully coursed brick with cut marble detailing and quoins. The tin clad roof featured two lanterns plus a central cupola, all bracketed by massive chimneys at each gable end. It was in towns such as Perth that the confidence of an establishment professional class began to take root in the early 19th century.

The turn of the century ushered in the creation of that supreme show of individual confidence – Fulford Place – on the banks of the St. Lawrence in Brockville. Fulford Place and its grounds were completed in 1900 by George Fulford who, in an age before income tax, had amassed a huge fortune from the patent medicine business. He built this massive stone mansion on a ridge above the river and softened it with expansive wood verandas that take advantage of the views across the river and the surrounding landscape, designed by Boston's renowned Olmsted Brothers firm.

From humble homesteads to resplendent mansions, these buildings represent a range of people whose lives added to an already distinct eastern Ontario culture. Visiting these buildings today provides you with a unique perspective on how our ancestors lived, worked and shaped Ontario. Saving these treasures for future generations is the mission of the Trust. Experiencing them and learning their stories remains your pleasure.

WHAT'S ON . . .

. . . the shelf

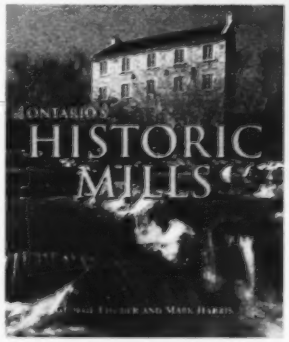
The Story of Brockville – Men and women making a Canadian community on the United States frontier, 1749-2007, by Dr. Glenn Lockwood.

This long-awaited Brockville history book has been skillfully written by Dr. Glenn Lockwood. Glenn is a professional historian known for his in-depth research, his ability to capture the essence of a place and its people, and for his talent at writing a superb local history. Social, political, industrial and military subjects make this a well researched and informative history book filled with maps, photos and drawings – a treasure not only for every Brockville home but also for those interested in the region's history.

The 660-page book can be purchased from Leeds County Book Store in downtown Brockville.

The illustration on the book jacket is a copy of an original watercolour by Pam Warren Mickinson, showing a view up Court House Avenue.

Ontario's Historic Mills, by George Fischer and Mark Harris.



The Boston Mills Press. This richly illustrated guide features photographs and detailed descriptions of Ontario's most remarkable mills. Some were chosen for their fascinating histories, some were chosen for their architectural beauty, all evoke Ontario's early industrial and cultural heritage.

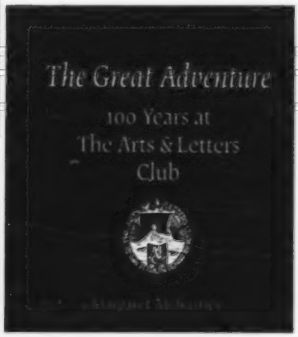
Mills are listed alphabetically according to regions of the province. Each listing includes concise travel instructions, a brief history of the mill's use, and a handy at-a-glance box with notes on age, historic and current operations, location and access times for visitors. Whether you're planning to visit Ontario's historic mills in person or from the comfort of your favourite reading chair, this colourful and compelling guide is a must.

Harris is the co-author . . . of *Waterfalls of Ontario*. A hydrogeologist by trade, he maintains an active interest in Ontario's natural and cultural heritage.

Fischer's photographs have been featured in over two dozen books and on an international series of fine-art posters. His work has also appeared in such notable publications as the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*.

The Great Adventure: 100 Years at The Arts & Letters Club, by Margaret McBurney.

Printed and bound in Canada by Friesens. On March 23, 1908, Toronto journalist Augustus Bridle called together a group of writers, musicians, architects, academics and supporters of the arts to a meeting at the St. Charles Hotel on Yonge Street to found what would become a remarkable and enduring organization devoted to the celebration, championing and challenging of the arts in English Canada: the Arts and Letters Club of Toronto.



As both an oasis and a crucible, the Arts and Letters Club of Toronto attracted, from the very beginning, men and women (although the club did not admit women until 1985) who have been integral to the creation of an English Canadian culture – including the Group of Seven, Robertson Davies, Vincent Massey and Marshall McLuhan.

The Great Adventure tells the extraordinary history of the first hundred years of this unique institution and its rich assembly of characters who have made such an enormous impact on Canadian culture.

Margaret McBurney is a designer and social and architectural historian. She has been a member of the Arts and Letters Club since 1987 and served as president from 1998 to 2000.

In the coming months . . .

The Ontario Heritage Trust regularly hosts or attends events that impact our rich and unique heritage. From provincial plaque unveilings to conferences, we are busy year-round with activities that promote heritage conservation in Ontario.

Here are some of the events and activities occurring over the next few months. Visit our website at www.heritagetrust.on.ca for more details!

March 24, 2009 – Provincial plaque unveiling to commemorate the French community in Welland. Formed in 1918 when a number of French-Canadian families arrived from Quebec to work in the Empire Cotton Mill, the French Town neighbourhood grew throughout the 1920s. A francophone parish, schools and clubs followed. Another wave of immigrants arrived at the outset of the Second World War and the French community flourished as a centre for French-Canadian culture. A strong francophone influence remains within Welland to this day.

March 2009 – Premiers' Gravesites Program marker unveiling commemorating The Honourable Harry Corwin Nixon (Premier May to August 1943) in Brant County. Born in St. George, Harry C. Nixon was Ontario's 13th premier. While his term in the premier's office is the shortest on record, he was the most experienced Member of Provincial Parliament ever, serving 42 years. After the resignation of Gordon Conant, Nixon was elected leader and assumed the premiership. The Liberals were defeated in the election three months later, but he retained his seat until his death in 1961.

Harry Corwin Nixon (Premier, May to August 1943)
Photo courtesy of the Archives of Ontario

April 25, 2009 – Launch of Doors Open Ontario 2009 in Guelph. From April to October each year, communities across the province open their commercial buildings, courthouses, places of worship, gardens and other heritage sites to the public free of charge. Experience these hidden heritage treasures first-hand! Visit www.doorsopenontario.on.ca for details of upcoming events in your area. To order a copy of the printed guide (available in April 2009), call 1-800-ONTARIO (668-2746).

May 2009 – The Niagara Apothecary opens for the summer season (Niagara-on-the-Lake). Step through its doors and see how pharmacists practised their profession over 100 years ago. Hours of operation are daily from the Mother's Day weekend to Labour Day, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., then weekends to Thanksgiving (second Monday in October). Admission is free.

The Niagara Apothecary (Niagara-on-the-Lake)

May 16, 2009 – Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site opens for the summer season. Join us in 2009 at Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site in Dresden to celebrate the achievements of Reverend Josiah Henson and other early black settlers. At the five-acre museum site visitors can explore the interpretive centre and the exhibit I'll Use My Freedom Well, as well as three historic buildings, two cemeteries and a gift shop. Hours of operation are Tuesday to Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Sunday, noon to 4 p.m.; open Mondays in July, August and holidays.

May 23, 2009 – Summer hours begin at Fulford Place. Sip tea on the sweeping veranda of this magnificent Edwardian mansion overlooking the mighty St. Lawrence River in Brockville. Experience the baronial feel of the Honduras mahogany ceilings and panelled walls in the dining room, library and grand hall. Also visit the gift shop and enjoy afternoon tea in the Tearoom. Hours of operation are Tuesday to Sunday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Let Our Magnificent Heritage Venues Inspire You

Ontario Heritage Centre | Enoch Turner Schoolhouse | Elgin and Winter Garden Theatre Centre | George Brown House

Exquisite food, spectacular settings and dedicated service await your next corporate or social event. Our experienced event coordinators will ensure that all your expectations are met and surpassed.

Call **416-314-3585** www.heritagetrust.on.ca

Discover Ontario's Unique Heritage

Events run from April through October 2009 in communities across the province

Call 1-800-ONTARIO (1-800-668-2746) for your free guide.

Visit www.doorsopenontario.on.ca for details.

Doors Open Ontario is a program of the Ontario Heritage Trust.